

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-20 are amended. Thus, claims 1-20 are active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

I. Substitute Specification and Abstract

The specification and abstract have been carefully reviewed and revised in order to correct grammatical and idiomatic errors in order to aid the Examiner in further consideration of the application. The amendments to the specification and abstract are incorporated in the attached substitute specification and abstract. No new matter has been added.

Also attached hereto is a marked-up version of the substitute specification and abstract illustrating the changes made to the original specification and abstract.

II. Objection to Drawings

In item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because the view numbers are not in accordance with 37 CFR 1.84(u)(1). In particular, the Examiner asserted that “FIG. 2A” should replace “FIG. 2a,” and “FIG. 3B” should replace “FIG. 3b.”

37 CFR 1.84(u)(1), in relevant part, provides that “[p]artial views intended to form one complete view, on one or several sheets, must be identified by the same number followed by a capital letter” (emphasis added). However, the Applicants respectfully submit that each partial view in the drawings is identified by the same drawing number and is followed by a capital letter, in compliance with 37 CFR 1.84(u)(1). Figures 3, 23, 24 and 30 are the only drawings containing partial views that are intended to form one complete view. Figure 2 does not contain partial views that are intended to form one complete view. In particular, Figure 3 is composed of “FIG. 3A” and “FIG 3B”, Figure 23 is composed of “FIG. 23A” and FIG. “23B”, Figure 24 is composed of “FIG. 24A” and FIG. 24B, and Figure 30 is composed of “FIG. 30A” and FIG. 30B” (emphasis added). Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that each drawing containing partial views is identified by the same drawing number and is followed by a capital letter.

Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

III. Indefiniteness Rejection of Claims

In item 4 on page 3 of the Office Action, claims 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention.

In particular, the Examiner asserted that it was not clear what was meant by the limitation “transfer at least part of the right to duplicate the content.” Although not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the Applicants note that claims 5 and 8 also contain this limitation.

This limitation has been deleted from claims 5, 8, 15 and 17 so as to particularly define each limitation recited in claims 5, 8, 15 and 17-18. Claims 5, 8, 15 and 17 each recite that the control unit transmits, to the device that issued the duplication request if the device is judged to be in the group, information indicating a permitted number of duplications that is equal to or smaller than the permitted number of duplications stored in the storage unit. Accordingly, claims 5, 8, 15 and 17, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention.

Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the indefiniteness rejection of the claims be withdrawn.

IV. Non-Statutory Rejection of Claim 20

In item 6 on page 3 of the Office Action, claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter because the program of claim 20 was not defined as being embodied in a computer-readable medium.

To overcome the rejection of claim 20, the preamble of claim 20 has been amended to define the program as being “tangibly embodied in a computer-readable medium,” as kindly suggested by the Examiner. In addition, the preamble of claim 20 has been amended to recite that the program, “when run, causes the computer to perform operations comprising,” similar to the Examiner’s suggested amendment of claim 20.

In view of the amendments to claim 20, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 20 recites patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

V. Allowability of Claims

The Applicants thank the Examiner for kindly indicating, in item 12 on page 6 of the Office Action, that all of the claims in the application would be allowable if amended to include:

- (A) the language of lines 6-8 of original claim 3 in each independent claim;
- (B) a correction of the limitation “at least a part of the right to duplicate” in claims 15 and 17, as well as claims 5 and 8; and
- (C) the suggested language in item 6 to overcome the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

As described above, the indefiniteness rejection of the claims and the non-statutory rejection of claim 20 have each been overcome.

Independent claims 1, 17 and 19-20 have each been amended to include the limitations recited in lines 6-8 of original claim 3, as well as some limitations from original claim 2 that were necessary to provide proper antecedent basis for the limitations recited in lines 6-8 of original claim 3, which depended from claim 2.

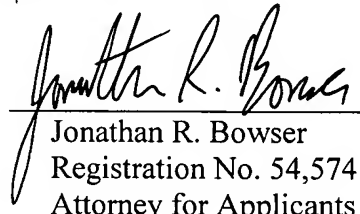
Accordingly, in view of the Examiner’s assertion that all of the claims of the application would be allowable if the claims were amended in accordance with conditions (A)-(C) identified above, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-20 are now clearly in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is respectfully solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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September 26, 2006